Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computerized method for improved handling of messages directed to a user of an electronic messaging system, said method comprising:

    determining user characteristics capable of identifying said user as addressee of a message;

    analyzing a certain message and determining [[its]]message characteristics of said certain message from one or a multitude of message fields; [[and]]

    selectively applying at least one deduction rule of a potential set of deduction rules, based on said user characteristics and said message characteristics, to said certain message; and

    responsive to selectively applying at least one deduction rule, which assigns, said at least one deduction rule identifying a role of said user and assigning said role to said certain message, said role revealing a said user's relationship of said user to said certain message.

2. (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein said user characteristics at least comprise one of the following elements: a user ID of said user in said messaging system; a name of said user; a nickname of said user; and wherein said message characteristics at least comprise one of the following elements: a contents of a TO: field; a contents of a CC: field, identifying addressees receiving a complimentary copy; a contents of a BCC: field, identifying addressees receiving a blind carbon copy; the a contents of the a body of said message; and wherein said set of deduction rules comprises at least one of the following deduction rules: a first deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-ADDRESSEE, if said user is the only addressee in said TO: field; a second deduction rule, which assigns a role of MULTIPLE-ADDRESSEES, if said user is one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field; a third deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-CC-ADDRESSEE, if said user is the only addressee in said CC: field; a fourth deduction rule, which assigns a role of MULTIPLE-CC-ADDRESSEES, if said user is one of a multitude of addressees in said CC: field; a fifth deduction rule, which assigns a role of BCC-ADDRESSEE, if said user is an addressee in said BCC: field; a sixth deduction rule, which assigns a role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is a member of a distribution list in said TO: field.

3. (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 2, wherein said set of deduction rules further comprise: a seventh deduction rule, which assigns a

role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is the only or one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field but said message does not contain a salutation with said user's name or nickname; an eighth deduction rule, which assigns a role of DISTRIBUTION-LIST, if said user is the only or one of a multitude of addressees in said TO: field and if said message comprises a footer and said footer does not comprise information referring to a person or entity said user has an established relationship with; a ninth deduction rule, which assigns a role of SINGLE-ADDRESSEE or a role of MULTIPLE-ADDRESSEES respectively, if said user is the only one or one of a multitude of addressees respectively in said CC: field but said message comprises a salutation with said user's name or nickname.

4.   (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein in a message list comprising said message and other messages directed to said user, said role assigned to said message is indicated visually.

5.   (Currently Amended) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 4, wherein said indication is ~~anyone or combination~~ one of the following: an icon uniquely indicating said role; a textual indication of said role, <u>and a combination of the icon uniquely indicating said role and the textual indication of said role.</u>

6.   (Original) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 4, wherein said message list is organized in groups of messages to which a same role has been assigned.

7.   (Original) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 6, wherein within each of said groups messages are organized according to any prioritization technology.

8.   (Currently Amended) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein, [[if]]<u>when</u> said message is opened, said message characteristics contributing to said assigned role are visually emphasized.

9.   (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein, said third step is performed for each new arriving message; or when a message is opened; or at repeating time intervals for messages for which no role has been assigned yet.

10. (Currently Amended) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein, said user characteristics and[[/or]] message characteristics are determined by application of data[[/text]] mining technology.

11. (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein, if multiple of said deduction rules are applicable, a predefined precedence scheme defines which of said applicable deduction rules finally succeeds.

12. (Previously Presented) The computerized method for improved handling of messages according to claim 1, wherein said messaging system is an e-mail system and said messages are e-mails.

13. (Previously Presented) A computer system comprising means adapted for carrying out the steps of the method according to claim 1.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for improved handling of messages directed to a user of an electronic messaging system, the computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium, ~~comprising~~ having a set of computer readable ~~program means for~~ instructions tangibly embodied thereon; and

when said set of computer readable instructions is run on said computer, said set of instructions ~~causing a~~ causes said computer to: ~~perform a method according to claim 1 when said program is run on said computer~~

determine user characteristics capable of identifying said user as addressee of a message;

analyze a certain message and determine message characteristics of said certain message from one or a multitude of message fields;

selectively apply at least one deduction rule of a potential set of deduction rules, based on said user characteristics and said message characteristics, to said certain message; and

responsive to selectively applying at least one deduction rule, said at least one deduction rule identifies a role of said user and assigns said role to said certain message, said role revealing a relationship of said user to said certain message.